

Are complexes fire-safe?

Tenants question security

Apartment fires in a few area complexes have prompted some residents to question the security of their apartments. Although city building codes do provide preventive construction, complexes built in Bryan, College Station and rural areas have different requirements for fire protection.

College Station apartments and duplexes must be separated by a one-hour tenant separation wall as defined in the 1973 building code.

Designed to keep the fire from spreading quickly, the wall is usually

constructed one of two ways: two sheets of five-eighths inch fire-coded sheetrock or two sheets of one-half inch sheetrock with mineral wool insulation between them. The wall extends to the ceiling level.

The purpose of the wall is not really for protection of the apartment, but rather to provide adequate time to evacuate residents, says College Station Fire Marshal Harry Davis.

Other fire protection alternatives include a four-hour fire wall or a two-hour party wall, he said. Neither

of these is required in the building code.

The fire wall is made of masonry material and extends from ground level to three feet above the roof. Of the three types of walls, this offers the best protection, Davis said. The party wall is also constructed of sheetrock and extends from the floor to the roofline, while the tenant separation wall extends only to the ceiling.

Davis said he thinks the tenant separation walls "work pretty well if installed the way they're supposed to be." He added that he feels most of them are installed properly since they must pass inspection by both the building inspector and fire inspector before the owner is allowed to connect the electricity.

In 1975, a requirement calling for the installation of smoke detectors in each dwelling unit was adopted. All apartments and duplexes built after May 26, 1975, must be equipped with an audible smoke detecting unit. The requirement does not specify whether the apartment owner or dweller is to supply the detector nor does it set out specifications for them, but there must be a working unit in the dwelling for it to pass final inspection.

Bryan follows the 1971 version of the same building code. It also stipulates a one-hour tenant separation wall between units. There is, however, no requirement for a smoke detector.

"One of these days when they get those things perfected, we may require them," said Bruce Chandler of the Bryan building inspection department. "I don't feel like we should make the builder put in something that will be disconnected and left hanging there."

He added that units built before the 1971 building code was adopted do not have any requirements for fire protection.

Brazos County has no fire protection requirements for complexes built in rural areas, Davis said.

"As far as I know, they (builders) have no requirements except what their insurance companies may require," he said. "One of the advantages to building in the county is to do away with the stipulations, although they do have to meet certain rural electricity codes."

There are no legislative bodies, counties included, that are authorized by Texas state law to enact fire protection requirements, said Brazos County Judge W.R. Vance. Builders must only meet the nearest city's electrical code.

Tonight's broadcast: courtesy of the wind

United Press International

PLYMOUTH, N.H. — The bone-chilling winds of winter, cursed by most New Englanders, have been harnessed by the students at Plymouth State College to run their campus radio station.

"We are on wind power. This hour is 100 percent wind propelled" goes a station jingle.

"On a good windy day we can run the transmitter the entire day on wind," station Manager Paul Shulins said Tuesday.

The station's windmill will charge a bank of storage batteries enough on the average day to run the 10-watt station for three to four hours.

A 10-mile-per-hour breeze is needed to generate electricity with maximum output of 200 watts coming at 24 mph.

Shulins said the windmill was purchased to light a sign on campus and thereby demonstrate the feasibility of wind energy. But interest in the project dwindled until Shulins and friends installed it at the radio station.

The first two nights it ran the station for six hours and the project was labeled a success.

"It was originally intended for people to learn about wind power and that's what it's doing," Shulins remarked.

'Violet' reaction to make power?

United Press International

SAN ANTONIO — A researcher at the University of Texas-San Antonio predicts the discovery of the purple membrane, the only known example of photosynthesis occurring without chlorophyll, can provide the mechanism for a new type of solar battery.

Dr. Robert D. Renthal, assistant professor of biochemistry, has been awarded \$178,000 in grants from the Public Health Service and Robert Welch Foundation to continue studies he began two years ago into how the purple membrane, a specialized patch formed in red bacteria cells along the Dead Sea and other salt flats, converts sunlight into electrical energy.

Renthal is quick to credit discovery of the purple membrane to Dr. Walter Stoeckenius of the University of California-San Francisco. He said his research project is one of several started since Stoeckenius isolated the membrane in 1965 at Rockefeller University, opening up a wide range of possibilities for its use.

The purple membrane may represent the first hope of scientists to overcome the highly unstable condition of chlorophyll that has prevented its use to produce energy for man.

Heretofore — despite scientists' progress in developing solar cells, giant reflectors, and other devices — scientists have lagged far behind na-

ture in their ability to harness solar energy from chlorophyll. Although about one-third as efficient as chlorophyll, the purple membrane is more stable and more easily extracted from the bacteria.

"Based on the findings, scientists eventually may be able to design a plastic sheet, modeled on the membrane, that can store solar energy and function as a solar battery," Renthal said of his studies.

He said sunlight activates a pump-like mechanism in the purple membrane that carries protons, the simplest type of ion, across the cell membrane.

"The ejected protons produce an electrochemical gradient that the cell uses as a miniature battery," he said. "The research also may contribute to basic medical knowledge. The functions of the kidneys, the intestines and the nervous system involve ion pumps."

The bacteria normally use oxygen to extract energy from food, but when they become crowded and use all the oxygen in their surroundings, they make purple membranes that allow them to continue to live off solar energy, he said.

Scientists said because the purple membrane helps the bacteria to push salt through their membranes to the outside, the research also could be useful in desalination projects to help man extract fresh water from the sea.

WE BUY BOOKS EVERY DAY!

And remember we give 20% more in trade for used books.

LOUPOT'S BOOKSTORE

Northgate - Across from the Post Office

Pizza Inn

When better Pizzas are made, Pizza Inn of Bryan-College Station will make them.

Buy One Pizza Get The Next Smaller Size Free

With this coupon by any giant, large or medium size thin crust pizza at regular menu price and receive one pizza of the next smaller size with equal number of ingredients and the same type crust free.

Pizza Inn Specials not included

Pizza Inn.
Valid thru Dec. 15

"We've got a feeling you're gonna like us."

NOON BUFFET
11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Mon. - Fri.
All the pizza & salad you can eat.

1803 GREENFIELD PLAZA
(Next to Bryan High)
413 TEXAS AVE. S. 846-6164

Rapid Reduce Slender Energy Muscles Future Bar **NOW**
693-7431

DISCOUNT TROPHY AND ENGRAVING
MON.-FRI. 9:00-5:30 SAT. 9:00-1:00
215 S. MAIN 822-5923

3609 Place East 29th
PRIORITEAS
Imported Coffees, Teas, and Gourmet Comestibles
PERFECT STOCKING STUFFERS

French's Schools NIGHT CARE
French's Care-a-Lot
Every Thurs., Fri. and Sat.
900 UNIVERSITY (Behind Beef & Brew)
RESERVATIONS 693-1987 or 693-9900



MSC ALL NITE FAIR RELIVES THE TWENTIES.

ALL RECOGNIZED STUDENT ORGANIZATION ARE INVITED TO HAVE BOOTHS IN THE FAIR, FEB. 23. ENTRY DEADLINE — DEC. 8.
for more INFO. CALL 845-1515.

Something New at the Old Peanut Gallery

TONIGHT

"THANK GOD IT'S THURSDAY!" (Night)

BEER, WINE, 1c COKES & CHAMPAGNE 25c BAR DRINKS

1/2 PRICE CALL DRINKS, ICE CREAM DRINKS FROZEN DRINKS AND SPECIALTY DRINKS

\$3.50 Guys \$2.50 Girls

ASTRARTES

GARDEN DISCO

"Where Everybody Meets"

Bryan-College Station's Big City Disco

813 Wellborn Rd. 846-1100

WATCH FOR OUR "SURE HAPPY IT'S TUESDAY!" NEXT TUESDAY



PLANT SALE

Saturday, Dec. 9 10-2 pm
FLORICULTURE GREENHOUSE
BY THE FLORICULTURE CLUB